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ABSTRACT

Both the literal message and the vocal and nonverbal ways in which a message is presented combine to make up an individual's particular style of communication. Because research on communicator style has centered only on the communication characteristics of individuals, a study was conducted to examine the communication characteristics of two ethnic groups: Japanese and Filipinos. The Communicator Style Measure was completed by 730 Japanese college students and 203 Filipino college students from various universities in their respective countries. The measure inquired as to how the subject perceived his or her communication style in terms of nine variables. The results of the measure showed that the Filipinos perceived themselves as more attentive, contentious, dominant, friendly, relaxed, and animated, and as leaving more of an impression than did the Japanese. They had a stronger image of themselves as communicators. The Japanese, however, saw themselves as being more open than Filipinos. The Filipinos projected a more favorable communicator image than did the Japanese, the latter being shy, apprehensive, and reluctant to verbalize. (The Communicator Style Measure is appended). (HTH)

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# COMMUNICATION STYLES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS IN JAPAN AND THE PHILIPPINES

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[ A paper prepared for the Communication Association of the Pacific--Japan 1981 Conference, Nagasaki, Japan, June 20-21.]

Two basic speech behaviors act simultaneously to influence interpersonal interaction. One behavior, what is said, refers to the message and is "the literal, the denotative, the content." The other, how it is said, refers to the way the message is presented and is "the vehicle, the punctuation, the connotative, the style of communication (Norton, Webb and Schroeder,1979)." In this paper, our concern is with the latter behavior, the style of communicating, a behavior defined as "the way one verbally and paraverbally interacts to signal how literal meaning should be taken, interpreted, filtered, or understood (Norton, 1978)."

Each person possesses a particular style of communicating and the style reflects the person's own individual variation of preferred general modes of interpersonal communication. By virtue of frequency, each person's communication style becomes a discernible tendency to enact certain dimensions of the general modes. For example, one person's tendency may be to be talkative, outgoing and aggressive and, hence, that person tends to dominate most interpersonal interactions. This is his communicative style. Another person may tend to be quiet, reserved, and speaks only when others have spoken. For such a person, this is his speaking style. A person's style of communicating develops into an instinctive way of presenting the self to others (Norton, Webb and Schroeder, 1979).

Research on communicator style has centered for the most part on determining the variables which identify a communicator's style (Norton, 1974; Norton, 1977; Norton, 1978; Miller, 1977; Norton and Miller, 1975) and on how a communicator's style affects other people's perception of the communicator (Norton and Pettegrew,1977; Norton,Webb and Schroeder, 1979). The research deals with style as characteristic of an individual. The literature to our knowledge contains no studies of style as characteristic of a group, such as a social, national or ethnic group. This paper reports research, exploratory in nature, which studies the communication styles of Japanese and Filipino college students. Other studies (Bruneau, Ishii, Cambra and Klopf, 1980; Mordeno, Cambra and Klopf, 1980) report on the communication styles of students in America, Australia, China, Korea, and Micronesia.

## Method

The Communicator Style Measure (CSM: Norton, 1978) was completed by 730 Japanese students from Chou, Meiji, Nihon and Otsuma Women's universities and

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203 Filipinos from various universities studying public speaking at Speechpower, a private school in Manila. In the Japanese group, there were 433 males and 297 females in the age range 18 to 24 years of age, representing all classes of students. The Filipino group consisted of 102 males and 101 females in the same age range and classes as the Japanese. Each group included students majoring in subject areas from the arts, sciences, business, engineering, and nursing.

The CSM was initially developed by Mortensen (1972) and Mortensen, Norton and Arntson (1972). The measure was refined by Norton (1974) and Norton and Miller (1975). It appears in several versions and the fifty-one item version reported by Norton (1978) was used in this study. (Appendix)

The fifty-one items are randomly ordered and inquire of a subject if a particular communicative behavior is descriptive of how he perceives his style. A five-point scale is provided for each item and the subject responds by checking the point on each scale most representative of his perception of his behavior.

The following are examples of the content of the fifty-one items:

1. In most social situations I generally speak very frequently.

2. My speech tends to be very picturesque.

3. I am very argumentative.

4. I tend to constantly gesture when I communicate.

5. What I say leaves an impression on people.

Nine independent variables and one dependent variable (communicator image) are embedded in the CSM. Five items define each independent variable and six the dependent one. These are summed to obtain an index score for each variable. The variables are listed next along with an explanation of each as provided by Norton and Pettegrew (1977):

1. Dominant. This attribute refers to the tendency to come on strong in most social situations. A person who takes charge of things when with others is dominant; a person who generally speaks very frequently in social situations is dominant.

2. Friendly. This attribute refers to a person who usually demonstrates kindly interest and goodwill toward others. This person is seldom hostile towards others and is usually regarded with high esteem by others.

3. Attentive. This attribute refers to how alert a person is as a communicator. An attentive communicator tends to be encouraging to others, listening carefully to what they have to say. Such a person deliberately reacts in such a way that people know that they are being listened to.

4. Relaxed. This attribute refers to how much at ease a communicator appears to be. A person who is not conscious of any nervous mannerisms in his speech is relaxed; a person who is calm and collected when talking is relaxed; a person whose rhythm or flow of speech is not affected by nervousness is relaxed. The opposite of being relaxed is being apprehensive, a person's level of fear or anxiety resulting from either real or expected talk with one or more persons.

Those who have high degree of apprehension experience fear or anxiety in almost every communication encounter or anticipated encounter. Not only do they suffer the common "stage fright" the average person feels when giving a speech to an audience, they are almost always fearful or anxious in all speaking situations including the public speaking situation.

5. Contentious. This attribute refers to a person who constantly quarrels and disputes with others. Such a person may be thought of as belligerent and the cause of much interpersonal unrest.

6. Dramatic. This attribute refers to how verbally alive a person is. A person whose speech tends to be very picturesque is dramatic; a person who frequently exaggerates to emphasize a point is dramatic; a person who vocally acts out what is being communicated is dramatic.

7. Animated. This attribute refers to how nonverbally active a person is as a communicator. A person who actively uses facial expressions and physical gestures is animated. A person whose eyes tend to reflect a great deal of what they are feeling is animated.

8. Open. This attribute refers to how self-disclosing a person is as a communicator. A person who readily reveals personal things or openly expresses feelings and emotions is an open communicator; when other people generally know the person's emotional state even if the person does not say anything, the person is open.

9. Impression-Leaving. This attribute refers to how affecting a person is as a communicator. What this person says as well as how he says it often leaves an impression. If people react to this person when they first meet and tend to remember him, this person is impression-leaving.

10. Communicator Image. This attribute refers to how good a communicator a person is. If a person finds it easy to talk on a one-to-one basis or in small groups with strangers, he has a good communicator image. A person who finds it easy to maintain a conversation with a member of the opposite sex has a good communicator image.

After the CSM was administered and scored, the Japanese and Filipino results were analyzed using the Tuccy t-test (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner, and Bent, 1975), a procedure for comparing independent samples of unequal size.

## Results

Table 1 presents the comparison between the Japanese and Filipinos. The means, standard deviations and t-test comparisons on the ten variables are shown and the comparison reveal that the Japanese and Filipinos were significantly different on all variables except the dramatic one.

Specifically, the Filipinos perceive themselves to be more attentive, contentious, dominant, friendly, relaxed, animated, and impression-leaving than the Japanese and have a stronger image of themselves as communicators. The Japanese, on the other hand, see themselves as more open than the Filipinos.

TABLE 1.

CSM COMPARISONS BETWEEN JAPANESE AND FILIPINO STUDENTS

| CHARACTERISTIC | JAPANESE MEAN*** | JAPANESE STANDARD DEVIATION | FILIPINOS MEAN*** | FILIPINOS STANDARD DEVIATION | t COMPARISON |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Dominant | 16.47 | 3.01 | 15.11 | 3.73 | 5.36* |
| Friendly | 13.93 | 2.43 | 13.30 | 3.19 | 3.04** |
| Attentive | 15.17 | 2.45 | 12.13 | 2.75 | 15.22* |
| Relaxed | 15.59 | 2.78 | 14.71 | 3.52 | 3.81* |
| Contentious | 16.22 | 2.96 | 15.47 | 3.56 | 3.02** |
| Dramatic | 14.97 | 3.00 | 14.98 | 3.38 | NSF |
| Animated | 15.40 | 2.81 | 14.64 | 3.52 | 3.19** |
| Open | 14.54 | 3.03 | 15.04 | 3.54 | 2.08** |
| Impression-Leaving | 15.53 | 2.55 | 13.28 | 3.25 | 10.44* |
| Communicator Image | 20.62 | 3.64 | 17.75 | 4.10 | 9.62* |

*$p < .01$ **$p < .05$

***The lower the mean score, the more like the variable.

## Discussion

The Filipinos project a more favorable communicator image than the Japanese. With low mean scores on all but the open variable, they perceive themselves as able to interact effectively in communication situations and believe they are good communicators. They tend to take charge of social situations, are friendly, relaxed, verbally alive, nonverbally active, able to express feelings and emotions, and leave a favorable impression of themselves. They are not quarrelsome or disputive.

Recent research (Mordeno, Cambra, Klopf, 1980) supports the Filipino response on the relaxed variable. A person who is not nervous when speaking, who is calm and collected, is relaxed and is not apprehensive about talking to others. The previous research reveals that Filipinos have little fear of speaking to other people.

The Filipinos, according to other research (Golis, 1979), value getting along with others and desire harmony in interpersonal relations. This finding supports the high score on the contentious variable--Filipinos are not aggressive in oral encounters but cooperative, desiring to get along well with others.

The Japanese rate themselves most strongly on the open variable. They believe they are honest, sincere and authentic in their oral interactions--all qualities of socially desirable behavior. Yet they rate themselves low on the friendly, attentive, contentious, animated, impression-leaving and communicator image variables--ratings which imply that they do not hold a positive attitude toward their speaking effectiveness. Previous research bears out their response. The Japanese tend to be apprehensive in oral communication situations and are reluctant to verbalize (Ishii, Klopf and Cambra, 1979). In Japan, there are many sayings describing the importance of silence and disadvantages of speaking. However, there are few words praising good oral behavior. People have been taught that speaking is disadvantageous in getting along in society and the typical Japanese tries to avoid speaking out, especially in a formal setting (Okuda, 1975). There is a tendency toward reticence, supposedly derived from the value attached to effecting communication with the use of the fewest possible words. The Japanese were compared with the Filipinos on a reticence measure (the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension--McCroskey, 1970) as part of this study and the results show that the Japanese ($\underline{M}$ = 65.90; $\underline{SD}$ = 10.72) are significantly more apprehensive than the Filipinos ($\underline{M}$ = 58.10; $\underline{SD}$ = 10.60; $\underline{p} < .01$).

In Japan loquacity is a contemptible vice and eloquence is not necessarily a prized virtue. What is more desirable than eloquence is the ability to achieve whatever is desired without speaking a word since words are only one of the tools that may be used in communication while silence, too, is an implement that carries a message (Murata, 1980).

Where does this tradition come from? Some cultural anthropologists suggest Japan's millenia-old rice farming as one source. In rice farming, the farmers are on all fours most of the time--planting saplings, weeding or harvesting. Such a situation is hardly conducive to the development of a habit of speaking at length.

Another theory is that Japanese reticence derives from Japanese homogeneity, which, unlike the case of European nations, for instance, rarely creates problems that require extensive discussion or debate.

A particular factor for this tradition may be Zen Buddhism, which is a non-verbal approach to attaining the stage of nirvana, as compared with the other approaches such as reliance on ascetic practice, study of sutras, etc. Zen, which means meditation, is, to be sure, a silent meditation, and "koan," the logic-defying question asked by the master of the pupil, is not an exercise in polemics (Murata, 1980).

Caveats are in order about results. The first of these relate to the CSM. Like other psychometric instruments, the CSM is contingent about context, situations and time. People usually communicate differently in different contexts. For example, a person's speaking style probably will vary if that person is in a therapeutic, academic, religious, business or political context. Likewise, style will vary if the situation is loving, hating, playing, selling, lying, persuading, instructing, asserting, and so on. And, the time of day or the time of life may be a factor. More relaxed earlier in the day, a person, for instance, may be less contentious

than he might be after a hard day's work. And, as a person gets older, his communication style is likely to change (Norton and Pettegrew, 1977).

The CSM's validity is not complete at this time, Norton (1978) claims, and judging the results of the variables, especially the friendly one, should be done with caution, he writes. Moreover, the CSM apparently provides the most reliable data when it is employed by a neutral observer who uses it to predict the communication styles of those he observes.

Second, this research probably presents methodological problems and these need to be considered when interpreting the results. Such a problem could exist in the langauge of the CSM. Whether the CSM is linguistically and conceptually equivalent to each group is not known. It is plausible that an unknown portion of the results are attributable to variations in meaning the CSM might carry among the Japanese and Filipinos. Other methodological problems range from the difficulty of comparing people with different homogeneous backgrounds to the variations in the group's size.

In view of these caveats, further research is necessary to insure that the problems enumerated here have not contaminated the results. In spite of the fact that the results are supported to a large extent by other research, caution should be employed in generalizing about the results.

## Summary

Every person has a particular style of communication, that is, a way of communicating. Posture, gesture, facial expression, voice inflection, the sequence of ideas, rhythm and other speaking cues and tendencies tend to define the style. A person's style is a pervasive part of his behavior and affects his interactions with other persons. Whether groups of people, social, ethnic or national groups, similarly have a distinctive style is not known. This study attempted to discover if groups of students from Japan and the Philippines are characterized stylistically in some manner.

The results suggest that the Filipino students are friendly, dramatic, relaxed, open, animated, impression-leaving and hold a good communicator image of themselves. The Japanese, while open, do not feel they are very orally capable, being shy, apprehensive, and reluctant to verbalize.

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APPENDIX

COMMUNICATION STYLE

INSTRUCTIONS: The 51 statements below concern communication style. Indicate the degree to which the statements apply to the way you communicate by marking each statement whether you (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) are undecided, (4) disagree, or (5) strongly disagree. Work quickly and record your first impression.

| Circle the Appropriate Number | | | | | Statement |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1. I readily reveal personal things about myself. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2. Once I get wound up in a heated discussion I have a hard time stopping myself. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3. I always prefer to be tactful. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4. I am conscious of nervous mannerisms in my speech. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5. In most social situations I generally speak very frequently. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6. I actively use facial expressions when I communicate. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7. In most social situations I tend to come on strong. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 8. I am an extremely friendly communicator. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9. I have a tendency to dominate informal conversations with other people. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 10. Very often I insist that other people document or present some kind of proof for what they are arguing. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 11. What I say usually leaves an impression on people. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 12. As a rule, I am very calm and collected when I talk. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 13. In arguments I insist upon very precise definitions. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 14. I leave people with an impression of me which they tend to remember. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 15. I can always repeat back to a person exactly what was said. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 16. Under pressure I come across as a relaxed speaker. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 17. The rhythm or flow of my speech is affected by my nervousness. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 18. The first impression I make on people causes them to react to me. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 19. Most of the time I tend to be very encouraging to people. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 20. I try to take charge of things when I am with people. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 21. I am very expressive nonverbally in social situations. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 22. My speech tends to be very picturesque. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 23. I always show that I am very empathetic with people. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 24. I tend to constantly gesture when I communicate. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 25. I am an extremely open communicator. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 26. Usually I do not tell people very much about myself until I get to know them quite well. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 27. I am an extremely attentive communicator. |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 28. I very frequently verbally exaggerate to emphasize a point. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 29. I really like to listen very carefully to people. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 30. Often I physically and vocally act out what I want to communicate. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 31. The way I say something usually leaves an impression on people. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 32. Regularly I tell jokes, anecdotes, and stories when I communicate. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 33. As a rule, I openly express my feelings or emotions. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 34. People generally know my emotional state, even if I do not say anything. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 35. Often I express admiration to a person even if I do not strongly feel it. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 36. I am a very relaxed communicator. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 37. When I disagree with somebody I am very quick to challenge them. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 38. I would rather be open and honest with a person rather than closed and dishonest, even if it is painful for that person. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 39. I dramatize a lot. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 40. I leave a definite impression on people. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 41. I am very argumentative. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 42. My eyes tend to reflect to a very great degree exactly what I am feeling when I communicate. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 43. I habitually acknowledge verbally other's contributions. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 44. I am dominant in social situations. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 45. I deliberately react in such a way that people know that I am listening to them. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 46. The way I communicate influences my life both positively and dramatically. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 47. I am a very good communicator. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 48. I find it very easy to communicate on a one-to-one basis with strangers. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 49. In a small group of strangers I am a very good communicator. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 50. I find it extremely easy to maintain a conversation with a member of the opposite sex whom I have just met. |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 51. Out of a random group of five people, including myself, I would probably have a better communicator style than 1, 2, 3, or 4 of them. |

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